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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA PROTESTS U.S. SHIP VISITS TO RHODES

Sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

1. (SBU) We received a diplomatic note from the Turkish MFA dated May 17 protesting the May 2-4 visit of two USN vessels to Rhodes (text of note below). The GOT's long-standing position has been that the 1947 Paris Peace Treaties bar all navy ship visits to the demilitarized Greek Dodecanese islands. We will not respond formally to the note, but in future conversations with appropriate MFA officials will remind them that in our interpretation of the treaties, naval vessels may indeed visit these islands, as long as they visit only civilian port facilities.

2. (SBU) Text of diplomatic note:

BEGIN TEXT

2006/DHGY/207376

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey presents its compliments to the Embassy of the United States of America and has the honour to bring the following to the kind attention of the Embassy.

The Ministry has been informed that the US navy vessels, "USS HUE CITY" and "USS TRENTON" paid a visit to the Island of Rhodes between 2-4 May 2006.

The Ministry would like to emphasize that Rhodes and other Dodecanese islands have been placed under a permanent demilitarised status by the 1947 Paris Peace treaty which excludes all forms of military presence and activities on the said islands including port visits by naval vessels.

Therefore, the Ministry requests the US Government to continue supporting the regime elaborated in the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Embassy of the United States of America the assurances of its highest consideration.

Ankara, 17 May 2006

END TEXT

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WILSON